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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Naval Air Force Pacific Announces
2013 Sea and Shore Sailors of the Year**

SAN DIEGO – Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet announced its 2013 Sea and Shore Sailors of the Year during a ceremony aboard Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego Feb. 13.

Naval Aircrewman (Mechanical) 1st Class Matthew Meadows, of Marrero, La., representing Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 4, earned Sea Sailor of the Year (SOY), and Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class (AW) Robert Layton, a native of Everett, Wash., representing Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 129, earned Shore SOY.

“It’s extremely humbling,” said Meadows. “I can’t help but think of all my shipmates, chiefs, commanding officers and CMCs (command master chiefs) that have helped me to get this far.”

Layton also referred to the gratitude he has for his peers, leaders and family.

“They’ve pulled me all the way through my career and taught me everything I know,” said Layton. “It’s all about teamwork. With teamwork we all have a role. People teach us and we turn around and teach others.”

Meadows and Layton were selected from a group of 10 candidates representing more than 40,000 Sailors serving in the sea and shore components within Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

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While announcing this year's winners, Vice Adm. David H. Buss, commander, Naval Air Force, Pacific, acknowledged the dedication and accomplishments of each finalist.

"These Sailors are an incredible group who truly represent the best that we have in Naval Air Forces today," said Buss.

He commented that all of the candidates are characterized by the same attributes of dedication, love for service, and leadership ability.

"Each of these Sailors have unique backgrounds and took different paths to get here, but they each strive with a common purpose to make the Navy, and their slice of it, a better place," said Buss. "With these Sailors, the Navy is in remarkable hands."

After arriving in San Diego Feb. 7, participants completed physical requirements and participated in an extensive interview process. Later, the finalists and their spouses joined service counterparts from Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Commander, Naval Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet at various social events and luncheons, including a visit with the local Pearl Harbor Survivors Association and an event aboard the USS Midway Museum.

Force Master Chief Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (AW/SW) Anthony J. Johnson spent the entire week with the candidates.

"This week has been about bringing the best of all communities together and giving them the chance to collaborate and learn from one another," said Johnson. "It's been about the journey and zeroing in on excellence. These Sailors are phenomenal. Awesome. We can rest assured knowing that the Navy is in good hands."

Other Sea SOY finalists from Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet included: Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class James Cunningham, Naval Air Technical Training Center; Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Fuels) 1st Class Anthony Ellis Johnson, USS John C. Stennis (CVN 74); Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 1st Class (AW/SW) Sania Mendez, Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 78; and Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class (AW/SW) Adam Oguntala, USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76).

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Other Shore SOY finalists from Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet included: Aviation Aircrewman (Avionics) 1st Class (NAC/AW) Ryan Fuhrman, VQ-7; Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class (AW/SW) Jason Lechowicz, Fleet Readiness Center Southwest; Navy Counselor 1st Class (SW/AW) Tomeka McDonald, Commander, Patrol and Reconnaissance Wing 57; and Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class (AW/SW) James Power, Commander, Fleet Air Forward, Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Detachment Atsugi, Japan.

Meadows and Layton will travel to Hawaii, where they will compete for the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet's Sea and Shore SOY titles.